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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
THE ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: 2009 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy Statement

FROM: Administrator Lisa P. Jackson

TO: All EPA Employees

I believe that there is no higher calling than public service, and that there is no more important work in public service than the pursuit of civil equity. Our credibility and efficacy in the area of EEO is inextricably linked to our integrity and impartiality. In a sense, our capacity to protect human health and the natural environment depends on the protection of the workforce and the vindication of workforce rights, and we are duty bound to protect the rights of all employees, without bias or favoritism. To these ends, EPA must always strive to foster a work environment where the principles of EEO are willingly embraced and diversity is valued and understood.

Maintaining a world class public service workforce requires strategic efforts to tap into the intellectual capital of our global economy. The 2000 Census shows major shifts in the demographic profile of the population we serve and the labor force from which we recruit. It is predicted that within the next 30 years, no single racial or ethnic group will comprise the majority of the nation's population. Clearly, changes associated with our increasingly pluralistic society bring concurrent opportunities and challenges.

Guiding Principle

EPA will be fully committed to the principles of EEO, equity, and diversity in the workplace and adhere to the policy of ensuring equal employment opportunity, prohibiting unlawful discrimination, retaliation and harassment in all its forms, and promoting diversity and inclusiveness.

Definition(s)

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) refers to the set of laws and policies that mandate all individuals' rights to equal opportunity in the workplace. The unequivocal protection of these fundamental civil rights in the workplace is the cornerstone of our American democracy and the foundation upon which diversity can thrive.

Diversity refers to the human qualities that are different from our own and those of groups to which we belong; but are manifested in other individuals and groups. Dimensions of diversity include but are not limited to: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual

orientation, educational background, geographic location, socioeconomic status, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs, political beliefs and ideologies.

Diversity management, in contrast, is a proactive and appropriate response to the changing profile of our world. It is imperative that we recognize that in order to be relevant in the global economy of the 21st century, the Agency must recruit, develop, and retain a world class workforce that reflects the many dimensions of the society it serves. Based on the empirical correlation between workforce diversity and high performing organizations, a strong business case can be made for diversity.

Affirmation

I wish to affirm that no employee will be denied equal opportunity because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, status as a parent, sexual orientation, marital status, protected genetic status or prior EEO activity (reprisal). Individually, and collectively as an Agency, we must:

- ensure that all programs to recruit, hire, train, develop, promote, reward, and discipline employees are conducted in a fair and consistent manner on the basis of merit. Each employee will be regarded fairly and treated with dignity and respect.
- maintain a work environment free from unlawful discrimination, reprisal and harassment. To do otherwise is simply not an option. It is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Managers and supervisors will continually be held accountable for their responsibility to identify and correct discriminatory policies, practices and behaviors and for taking prompt and appropriate action to ensure that the work environment is free of unlawful discrimination, reprisal and/or harassment.
- provide reasonable accommodations for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities.
- seek to resolve workplace conflicts in a prompt, impartial, confidential, non-discriminatory, and constructive manner, and without fear of reprisal. Every employee is encouraged to use the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process as a valuable tool in resolving workplace disputes and complaints of discrimination; and when appropriate, managers and supervisors shall fully participate in the ADR process.
- educate managers, supervisors, and employees of their rights and responsibilities under Federal law. Equal opportunity is good business and it is the law. I expect all managers, supervisors, and employees to carry out their duties accordingly.

Conclusion

I expect EPA to continue to maintain policies that allow all employees to work in an environment that is free from discrimination, reprisal, and harassment.

It is my vision that EEO and diversity management are separate but symbiotic functions essential to the success of the EPA as a high performing organization. Together, these functions create synergy and transform our organization into one in which the whole is greater than the sum of singular entities. We are strengthened by our diversity, and empowered by our commitment to effective EEO.